

BOOK REVIEWS.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW for September and November, 1894, and for January, 1895. This magazine continues to maintain the high standard of excellence proposed by its editors at the outset of its publication. Let us remind our readers that its founder-in-chief, J. G. Schurman, Principal of Cornell University, is "one of ourselves," a native of P. E. I., who has risen to the distinguished position occupied by him in virtue of the remarkable ability he has displayed alike in the acquisition and impartation of knowledge, and in the administration of university affairs. His influence has secured a private endowment on behalf of the magazine, enabling the publishers to put the numbers at a lower figure per annum than is charged for any similar magazine,—certainly, for any of even approximative merit,—throughout the literary world; and also to secure articles from the most illustrious students of philosophy in both Europe and America. Thus among the contributors in the numbers referred to above, in addition to the editors (Principal Schurman and Professor J. E. Creighton), are such well known names as those of Professor Royce, of Harvard, admittedly among the very foremost on the staff of that great university, with its upwards of two hundred teachers; Watson, of Queens University, Kingston, second to none as an interpreter of the critical philosophy heralded by Kant; Seth, of the University of Edinburg, many articles by whom occupy a conspicuous place in the "Encyclopedia Britannica;" Dyde, of Kingston, familiar to many of our readers on account of the position held by him for some years in the University of New Brunswick, and for whom it is safe to predict a distinguished career, as he fulfils his brilliant early promise; and several others.

The plan of contents ought to commend this magazine to a wide class of readers. It consists, first, of leading articles, so to call them,—essays upon such themes as The Problem of Hegel (Watson), The Consciousness of Moral Obligation (Schurman), Evolution and Development (Dyde), Pleasure and Pain Defined (Mezes), and so forth,—there being in all thirteen such articles in the three numbers in question. Then follows reviews of leading books published recently in the several departments of ethics, metaphysics, psychology, logic, etc., embraced within the compass of this very able magazine. To these succeed summaries of articles worthy of notice published in kindred magazines, English, American, French and German. Brief notices of new books bearing upon the purpose of the *Review*, and occasional notes of leading events in the philosophic world, complete the bi-monthly contents, the price being but \$3.00 per annum.

It is difficult to "sample" the contents of a magazine such as is *The Philosophical Review*. The leading essays are almost invariably models of condensed thought, to attempt an abridgement of which would be almost akin to exhibiting a can of preserved or pressed vegetables by way of imparting some acquaintance with the form, beauty and properties in general of the original plants. Here, however, is a short account and extracts from Prof. Schurman's article on Consciousness of Moral Obligation. After distinguishing between the "origin of authoritative moral law in the history of humanity," and "the emergence in each individual of a feeling of obligation to obey those objective behests," and stating that he proposes to confine himself to "the latter question alone," Prof. Schurman alleges that "from every point of view, the feeling of moral obligation—'I ought to do the right'—is an ultimate,

self-supporting, self-authenticating experience,—a characteristic of human nature as such,—a function of reason itself." If this be so, the question naturally arises, "How so many different theories of obligation should have gained a footing in ethical philosophy?"

Dr. Schurman discusses this aspect of the case at some length, showing that "obligation, as an abstract feeling, rarely, if ever, rises above the threshold of consciousness; it is apt to appear in union with piety, devotion, sympathy, propriety and prudence,"—meaning, with one or more of these associated feelings. So that while the sense of obligation in itself is simple, "our *actual* sense of obligation is not simple, but compound;" duty for its own sake having for auxiliary possibly "the rewards and penalties of the future state," or "sympathy or love for our fellow-men," or, that given "men feel they ought to be good, because in the life of goodness they are fellow-workers with God." "On its lower, as on its higher levels, religion is the indispensable ally of morality; and wise men cannot survey without anxiety and alarm the demand for secular, as opposed to religious, moral instruction in our schools; as though children could be influenced by abstractions like the categorical imperative. . . . Whatever makes men sensitive to the claims of moral law, has its place and worth in the evolution of human character; but the noblest spring of obligation is a love of goodness, which is fed by love of God and love of our fellow-men."

Then follows an estimate of the different ethical theories of obligation,—the intuitional or transcendental, with its recognition of "free homage to a law or ideal of goodness" as the quintessential element of moral obligation,—the empirical theory, which "gives a true account of the associated feelings which in our concrete experience accompany the sense of duty, foster its growth, and perhaps even make its first emergence in consciousness a possibility,"—and the theological, which "explains our consciousness of moral obligation as the effect of commands and prohibitions laid upon human beings by the Infinite Being." The curious supposition of "one lone man in an atheistic universe," regarding the possible development of whose consciousness some have indulged in speculation, is dismissed with more courtesy of contempt, perhaps, than it merits. And the conclusion of the whole matter is thus expressed: "To the question, Why ought I to do the good? the answer will still be, Because it is good. To say, Because God ordains it, would only be a short-hand formula for the complete statement: God is good, and the good has inherent authority over a nature like mine. Of course, for rogues and criminals this angel of goodness would be a poor scare-crow; but, so far as I know, there is no theory of obligation which proposes to abolish the auxiliaries and supports of obligation in dealing with natures that refuse to hearken to the voice of its persuasions. No particular theory of obligation, on the other hand, has a monopoly of jails, penitentiaries, the gallows,—or hell."

The foregoing will give our readers some idea of the tone pervading the purely ethical department of the *Review*. How thoroughly it is in accord with the teachings of St. Paul, *e. g.*, a simple reference, say to Eph. vi. ("Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right") will suffice to make manifest. Other departments have their own significance, and amazingly varied interest, as taste may dictate. On the whole, we know of no publication calculated so fully and clearly to keep its readers abreast of the philosophic thinking and tendencies of our age. And it is worth while remember-